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DON JOSEPH NASSI, FOUNDER OF COLONIES IN THE HOLY LAND, AND THE COMMUNITY OF CORI IN THE CAMPAGNA.

WE are at Cori, a little world-forgotten town of the Roman Campagna, a day's journey from Rome, in a southerly direction. The year is 1566. As in all parts of the Papal States, so in this nook, a Jewish congregation nestles, counting in all barely two hundred souls. They derive but a meagre livelihood from the handicrafts they exercise. As a compensation, however, they live on the most friendly and harmonious terms with their Christian neighbours. Unimpeded in the practice of their religion, they are provided with all the requisite institutions of a Jewish community. Their Rabbi, Maleachi Galliko, acts at the same time as the physician and teacher of his flock. In his days the various functions of Rabbi, preacher, teacher, and congregational secretary were not unseldom combined in the same individual.¹ This happy state of affairs was not long to continue. On the 13th of May, 1555, Paul IV., Caraffa, was elected to the pontifical chair, and proved a very scourge to the Jews in the Papal States, and in many Christian countries far around. Like earthquake shocks which lay whole towns in ruin, his papal bulls prostrated all the Jewish communities of his kingdom. The severity of his decrees was only exceeded by the rigorous cruelty with which they were enforced. Ecclesiastical commissioners traversed the country, and spread terror and dismay wherever they came. They confiscated the property of the Jews, passed sentences of death on many of them, and sent those whom they spared to the galleys. The cordiality that had existed between Hebrew and Gentile was destroyed at a blow. Intercourse between the two sections of the population was forbidden, and the Jews found themselves suddenly deprived of their livelihood. The accession of the gentle Pius IV. to the Papal throne did not much mend matters. The wounds inflicted by the iron hand of his predecessor, the Haman-like

¹ See R. Meïr, *Katzenellenbogen's Responsa*, No. 40.

Caraffa, could not be healed in his humane but all too short reign. The slight good he did effect was completely neutralised in the reaction of the next pontificate. Pius V. resumed Caraffa's policy of terror, and unmistakably showed that his aim was the extermination of his Jewish subjects. In every town where the children of Israel lived, stone walls were reared to isolate their Jewish quarter, as if it were a plague spot. The Ghetto became a universal institution. Commerce was taken out of the hands of the Hebrew. The only means of livelihood henceforth permitted to them was the sale of old clothes. Paul IV.'s bulls were revived with increased severity. Christians feared to bestow a kindness, or even a friendly greeting, upon a Jew. Many Hebrews, in order to escape this intolerable oppression, renounced their faith. Entire families sought the sheltering bosom of the Church. Amidst the general apostasy, religious fidelity became all the more difficult. Why, asked their persecutors, could not those who clung to the ancient creed do as others had done? Loyalty to the old faith was construed into defiance, and patient suffering was treated as contumacy. One may take it as a general axiom that wherever justice is wrested the standard of popular morals sinks; and this rule was again to be verified. The undisguised hatred of the legislator unloosed all the lawless passions of the mob. What could a Jew's life be worth when the sacred head of the Church was persecuting them with a fiery zeal as if he was carrying out some holy work pleasing to God? What was to become of that small handful of poor Jews living in Cori, when one support after another was failing them; when their chances of gaining a livelihood were being continually curtailed; and exaction and extortion became rife? At last, they were robbed of their last solace—if, indeed, they had cherished it—the confidence that their lives at least would be protected by the authorities. A respected member of the community, Abraham ben Bezaleel, had set out, in the course of his business, for the Roman Campagna, and, on the road, had been foully murdered by the landlord of an inn where he had lodged overnight. His co-religionists instituted a search for their missing brother, and found his remains. The murderer was apprehended, tried, and acquitted. And thus the Jewish citizens of the Papal States were practically outlawed. The murder of a Jew was, according to judicial ruling, no longer a punishable offence.

In this extreme peril, the small congregation of the Campagna heard a welcome voice, which roused them from their dull despair, promised them relief from their troubles, and

held out to them the hope of better times. While suffering all the birth-pangs of the Messianic Age, without the advent of a Messiah to console them, the report reached them of an unprecedented distinction conferred on a Jew at the Sultan Solyman's court, and of the love and pity with which this illustrious son of Israel remembered his unhappy brethren in the West. Juan Migue, the Marrano, or Don Joseph Nassi, to call him by his Hebrew title, had obtained the ruined City of Tiberias, and seven adjoining townships, as a mark of favour from his august lord. Three generations of Sultans—the original donor, his son Solyman and his grandson Murad—had confirmed the deed of gift with their seals,¹ and thus invested it with a character of permanency. Orders had further been sent to the Pachas of Damascus and Safed, bidding them render Don Joseph every assistance in the rebuilding of Tiberias. They were to furnish him with competent masons and workmen. Don Joseph himself was too busy with diplomatic affairs at the Porte personally to superintend the restoration of the town. He, accordingly, sent an agent, Joseph ibn Adret,² to direct the building operations. In the Chanuca month, Kislev 5325, Tiberias rose, like a phoenix, from its ruins.

But what did Joseph intend by this work of town-founding? If we are to believe the French Ambassador³ of his day, it was the first step of a large scheme which was ultimately to seat him on Judea's throne. Even Graetz⁴ has adopted this view, and connects the restoration of Tiberias with a supposed plan, on Joseph's part, of founding a Jewish State, with himself as the head. But nothing in Joseph's character or career justifies us in regarding him as a dreamer who would allow himself to be carried away by visionary ideas. From the beginning to the end of his life he always shows himself sober in his aims, a prudent calculator of consequences, ever keeping the end he has in view steadily before him, well versed in all the intricate arts of Court life, guided by practical aims, and eager for secular power. The fact has been alleged hitherto as an argument—and even Graetz has done it—that, while still at Venice, he petitioned the Senate to assign an island to the Jews, which request, by the way, was refused. But this negotiation does not prove that Don Joseph's supposed scheme of founding a kingdom had any real existence. Joseph's petition has been com-

¹ See Joseph ha-Cohen, *Emek Habaca*, ed. Letteris p. 127 ff., M. Wiener's German translation, p. 104 f.; M. A. Levy, *Don Joseph Nasi*, p. 20, n. 66.

² Isidore Loeb, *Revue des Études juives*, IV., 67.

³ M. A. Levy, l. c.

⁴ *Geschichte der Juden*, IX., 424, n. 1.

pletely misunderstood. About 1550, the Marranos were banished from Venice. Joseph himself was included in this edict. As long as he lived he preserved the senatorial order for his expulsion.¹ It was at this time, probably, that he entered into negotiations for the grant of one of the islands of the lagunas of Venice as a Ghetto or Jewish Quarter.

So far from connecting any romantic dreams with this enterprise, we may confidently declare that the considerations which influenced him were modest and practical. He evinced no desire to leave Constantinople and visit his new Tiberias, which he would certainly have done had he cherished a secret design of inaugurating a royal triumph throughout the Jewish world.

Don Joseph's contemporaries understood his intentions better. The small community of Cori has left us a valuable exposition of his real aims. Sultan Solyman did not hit upon the idea of bestowing this gift upon his favourite spontaneously. Don Joseph must have suggested to his august master the esteem in which he held these ruins, and the importance which he attached to their possession. In his intercourse with the Talmudists and Cabbalists of his Divan Don Joseph must certainly have heard the ancient tradition which connected the restoration of Palestine with the renovation of the ruined city on the shore of the sea of Tiberias. The opposition of the Arab population to this seemingly innocent undertaking; the fanatical sermons which the old *Scherif* preached on the event, taking, as his text, an old oracular saying that "the rise of Tiberias means the fall of Islam"; the coercive measures which the Pacha of Damascus was forced to adopt before he could obtain labourers, who only commenced work after the execution of two of their ring-leaders; all these facts are now quite intelligible. The Arabs had heard so much of the significance of Tiberias for the Jews that they felt a natural reluctance to labour at its restoration. Originally, therefore, it was a religious motive that prompted Don Joseph to ask Solyman for Tiberias, and secure the gift with every possible precaution. But what others looked upon as the confirmation of an idealist's hope, the experienced diplomatist regarded from a practical point of view. The believers in the literal fulfilment of prophecy hailed the event as an omen of the immediate advent of the Messiah.

¹ I believe that one must thus interpret Bonrizzo's words given by M. A. Levy, p. 45: "*Venne in geroposito del bando chera da questo eccellentissimo stato.*"

Don Joseph's intention, however, was more practical. He wished to found a Colony at one of the keys of Palestine—a place which tradition had hallowed, and which might serve as an asylum for fugitives. In this plan he may have had the welfare of his unhappy co-religionists in Italy especially in view. He had experienced, in his own person, all the terrors of intolerance, and, consequently, evinced the liveliest sympathy with the Marranos of Ancona. To quote a single instance. To punish Paul IV. and Ancona, which had rendered itself notorious by Auto-da-fés, Don Joseph exerted all his influence, though in vain, to obtain for the Port of Pesaro the privilege of exclusive commercial relations with Turkey.¹ Ever since his departure from Italy he had kept up an uninterrupted correspondence with the Jews of that country. The tale of their woes was poured into his ears. The report of their oppressions reached him through various channels. Their sufferings were ever present to his mind, and familiar to him in every detail. Accordingly, he took particular care that the news of the restoration of Tiberias should reach Italy. Ships for transporting the emigrants to their new home lay moored in the ports of Venice and Ancona. Money was provided to defray the expenses of the emigrants. Jewish artizans who could no longer make a living in the Peninsula were especially invited to colonize Tiberias. A new Jewish industry was to be reared in that colony. Silk and cloth manufactories, after the model of those at Venice, were to be built, and the industry of the Jewish colonists was to ensure their success. Mulberry trees were planted to provide silkworms with their proper food. Wool was, as Joseph ha-Cohen² tells us, imported direct from Spain to serve as raw material for the cloth factory.

Those Italian communities who did not languish under the yoke of the Papal Government, showed their sympathy with their unhappy brethren in the Papal States, by receiving the delegates cordially; and resolving to aid the emigration. The movement continually assumed larger dimensions. Numerous Jewish families embarked for the Holy Land.

At this stage of affairs, the message reached the Jews of Cori, who did not hesitate an instant to obey the welcome and unexpected call. The whole congregation gathered into the synagogue, and, under the presidency of Maleachi Galliko, of Nepi, their Rabbi, resolved unanimously to emigrate *en masse* to Tiberias. Four of their most respected members—all heads

¹ See David Kaufmann, *Revue des Etudes juives* XVI., 61-72.

² *Emek Habaca*, p. 129; *Weiner*, p. 105.

of families,—were appointed to direct the emigration. Two of these, Michael ben Aaron and Joseph ben Menachem, were to proceed to Venice in advance of the rest. Their mission was to arouse public sympathy with the movement and obtain for their impoverished community funds to meet travelling expenses. They were furnished, for this purpose, with a copy of the resolution, sealed with the congregational seal, and an official subscription book, for entering donations. This latter book further contained a minute statistical account of the financial position of the Cori congregation, a glorification of Tiberias, and an exposition of its significance. To smooth the way of the messengers, and to inspire the public with confidence in their representative character, their Rabbi, Galliko, was deputed to accompany them.

We can follow these delegates but a little way on their thorny path. The three men, armed with letters of recommendation of several Italian communities, among which that of the Roman congregation figured prominently, arrived at Ancona. The Jews here, handicapped though they were by the heavy claims their own poor made upon them, came readily to the assistance of the delegates, two of whom were personally known to several of them. Beside the help they rendered individually and in their communal capacity, the Jews of Ancona furnished the messengers with a letter of recommendation to other congregations.

The discovery of fresh manuscripts will perhaps throw light on the subsequent fortunes of New Tiberias and its colony, whose history forms so considerable a portion in a sketch of Don Joseph. The student who investigates Jewish history often finds the thread tantalisingly break off at the most interesting point, where he would most wish it continued. My material only extends as far as my account has gone. If I were to attempt with my scant information to continue the story, I should be compelled to pass beyond the borders of sober history into the realms of the imagination.

The two letters to which I am indebted for the gist of this account deserve a passing mention. Remarkable as is Jewish history, its sources are still more curious. In a MS. of the 16th century in my possession, a letter writer intended to initiate learners into the elegancies of Hebrew epistolary style which the Italian Jews always cultivated with predilection. I found the two letters of the communities of Cori and Ancona under the numbers 167-168. Model letters form a valuable branch of Hebrew literature. In every collection of Hebrew MSS. of any pretension, such specimens of epistolary composition are to be found. But they

have not yet received the attention they deserve. Because, as a rule, names of persons and places are suppressed in them, historians have thought these letters unworthy of notice. But we meet in them not only with fictitious letters, purely and simply models of composition, but also with genuine epistles, recording dramas of real life. These owe their preservation to the accident of being hidden in a place where no one thought of looking for them. When opened up, these sources will reveal a treasure of information concerning the political no less than the religious life of the Italian Jews. Historians have already recognised the turbulent literature of the responses as a rich mine of historical knowledge. The gentler department of epistolary literature is a still unworked field, which promises an ample historical harvest.

The small Cori community which through these manuscript records steps out for the first time into the broad daylight of history, shows to advantage in an educational point of view. No Jewish community was so small and obscure as not to be illuminated by some rays of Hebrew and secular culture. Corrupted as the letter from Cori seems to have become in the course of its transmission, it sufficiently proves that even small communities maintained the tradition of an ornate Hebrew style and handed down the art of letter-writing from generation to generation. The Rabbi, Galliko, did not compose this letter. He must have had, at his elbow, a congregational scribe or private member who was a master of a rich and pointed Hebrew style.

II.

A CONTRIBUTION TO THE HISTORY OF THE VENETIAN JEWS.

The few details here collected are all taken from a bundle of original documents preserved in the State Archives of Modena. The first of these reports, which, though undated evidently belongs to the seventeenth century, throws a flood of light on the circumstances of the Jews in Venice. To that city we owe an idea and its expression that have, alas obtained but too wide a currency—the Ghetto.¹ Here, for once in a way, philology becomes history. The word, if we are to believe our report, is not older than 1516. In that year the Venetian senate resolved to isolate the Jews in a separate quarter, in the vicinity of the Cannon Foundry.

¹ For the history of the word Ghetto see *Güdemann Geschichte des Erziehungswesens*, II., 250, n. 1.

Improbable as the derivation of Ghetto from Gietto seems, the historical evidence for this origin of the word is clear and indisputable. The word, then, belongs to the Modern Epoch. The Middle Ages may have had the reality, but the expression is an acquisition of the sixteenth century. In 1516, a serious attempt was made, for the first time, to shut up the Jews in a separate quarter. This social degradation was accompanied by a few other legal restrictions. Jewish money-lenders had hitherto been permitted to charge a maximum rate of 20 per cent., Christians being allowed to take twice as much.¹ This trade was now absolutely forbidden them. They were obliged, nevertheless, to maintain, at their own expense, three public loan offices²—so-called *Monte di Pietà*—where anyone could obtain advances on pledges at 5 per cent. The Jews were also forbidden to keep open shops. They were restricted to dealing in old clothes, and were only allowed to hold business relations with brokers of foreign firms. The houses they occupied were the property of Christians. The rent was at once raised one-third. But as a set-off, this was made a fixed rate, and could never afterwards be raised. As once the Jews of Sicily, so now their co-religionists of Venice were charged with a large share of the cost of entertaining the guests of the Republic, Royal Highnesses and Ambassadors, to whom the State assigned palaces. The Jews had to furnish these palaces. For taxes, they were assessed not as Jews but as merchants. The Ghetto had, later on, to be repeatedly enlarged. The immigration of Jewish fugitives from Spain and of Marranos, all included under the generic term *Ponentini* (Western European Jews), made the Ghetto illusory. These arrivals, albeit they were Jews, were permitted to settle in all parts of Venice among the Christian population. The *Ponentini* and the *Levantine* Jews shared with their Christian fellow-citizens the privilege of commerce with the Levant and the Occident. A court, consisting of five Venetian nobles, and styled the *Magistrato de cinque Savi*³ was specially instituted for the trial of their cases. The Jews generally had another court which ordinarily consisted of three patricians, and was called the Court of the *Cataveri*. It has a peculiar interest of its own. Its special *imprimatur* had often to be obtained for the publication of Hebrew books in Venice.⁴ The increase in

¹ Comp. Antonio Ive in *Revue des Études juives*, II., 780, n. 1.

² S. Cassel in *Ersch und Gruber's Encyclopädie*, II., 27, p. 760.

³ S. Cassel, loc. cit., p. 159, n. 73, mentions such a court of as early a date as the year 1298.

⁴ אופיציו של קאטאוירי. M. Steinschneider, *Hebräische Bibliographie* V., 126, and G. Wolf, ib. VI., 64, n. 4.

the number of Jews in that town was thus, as we see, a direct result of the encouragement offered by the Republic to their settlement, and of the toleration with which it regarded their public return to Judaism.

This account, derived from official documents, can be supplemented from a Jewish source, viz., from a legal decision of R. Meir ben Isaac Katzenellenbogen, the renowned Rabbi of Padua and Venice. This decision he forwarded in his eightieth year (probably in 1562) to R. Moses Isserles at Cracow, and it may be found in Isserles' collected *Responsa* (No. 51). It appears that, subsequent to the establishment of the new Ghetto, the former Jewish quarter continued to exist under the name of *Ghetto vecchio*, and served as a residence for Jewish merchants from the Levant, who were wont to stay, without their families, for short periods in Venice to transact their business. The Christian owners of these houses might let them when empty to Christians, but Jews and Christians were not to reside together in the same house. Thus, if rooms were vacant in houses occupied in part by Levantine Jews, such rooms might only be let to Jewish Venetian families. But even this could not be done without the consent of the civic authorities. For, in order to protect the interests of the residents in the new Ghetto, and to prevent new comers from eluding the burdens of the community, the Senate had decreed that all Jewish families not from the Levant, should not be permitted to reside in the old Ghetto without the previous consent of the Jewish community. Two officers appointed by the community were entrusted with the duty of granting this license, as occasion demanded, and the Rabbinical Court of Venice would afterwards render the permission complete by formally ratifying it. This usage, to which not only the Jews but also the Christian house-owners submitted, was first broken by a Jewish physician named Joseph, who entered into a contract with his Christian landlord without previously procuring permission from the Jewish community. His example found imitators, and more and more Jewish families surreptitiously left the new for the old Ghetto. Empty houses began to grow numerous in the new Ghetto, and their Christian owners made complaints, which the Court inquired into, and, as a consequence, the Jewish families which had without leave settled in the old Ghetto were expelled from that quarter. But now it was the turn of the owners of the old Ghetto to complain. The landlord of the physician Joseph was one of the injured parties. After prolonged negotiations, the community agreed to rent the houses of the old Ghetto, upon the condition of obtaining

the exclusive right of sub-letting them. Messer Giaco, the Christian patron of Joseph, himself as *Gentilhuomo*, a member of the Council, consequently compelled his non-Levantine Jewish clients (including the doctor Joseph) to quit his house, the key of which he handed over to the Jewish communal officers. As Joseph refused to accede, and maintained his right in the Court of First Instance against the landlord, who was disinclined to continue the law suit, the Jewish community summoned the doctor to appear before the Court of the Five Rabbis of Venice. By a number of lengthy objections, Joseph denied the competency of this Court, and for his contumacy was subjected by R. Meir Katzenellenbogen to the first degree of excommunication. On the 12th of Elul, 1559, he solemnly abandoned his defiant attitude, and on the 27th of the same month submitted himself in a formal *Rinunzia* to the authority of the community, which then permitted him by contract to resume his dwelling in the old Ghetto. Later on, however, he changed his mind, and revoked his former submission. Upon this the authorities pronounced the edict of excommunication against him. He then again betook himself to the civil courts, through whom in March, 1561, he obtained the suspension of the excommunication. He was less successful in moving Meir Katzenellenbogen to withdraw the edict altogether, though he sought to compel him to do so through the Court of Padua. This continued recourse to Christian interference was in itself sufficient to stamp the doctor in the eyes of R. Moses Isserles as worthy of excommunication.

From the *Responsa* of R. Meir Katzenellenbogen it appears that the Venetian Jews felt themselves quite secure, and had no fear of expulsion by the Senate. They knew that at the renewal of their license, which was always granted for a limited period only, the worst they would suffer might be some fresh enactments in regard to the laws regulating interest and loans. The condition of the Levantine Jews was more precarious, because the commercial jealousy of the Viennese merchants was always, though silently, working against them. Expulsion, like a constantly threatening storm, was always before their eyes.¹

וגם קביעת (ליוונטיני) הוא יותר מסופק, f. 112^d, ed. Cracow, שו"ת רמ"א
משלנו כי הם כקוץ בעיני רבים (מזינטילצא = gentilezza) אשר הם סוחרים
בים לאשר אלה היהודים מזיקים להם ולזה עומדים עליהם לגרשם אמנם
הקיומים שלנו לא נשמע מעול שאמרו לגר שינו ת"ל רק לפעמים באיזה קיום
הרש משנים איזה חק בהלואה :

Indeed, there loomed before all the great merchants the fear of banishment. There lie three official reports before us, all from the year 1550, in which the Duke of Ferrara's ambassador furnishes his liege with the reasons which, he supposes, induced the Senate to threaten the Marranos so suddenly with expulsion. These had argument on their side when they urged upon the Senate the benefits the State had gained through them. Such independent witnesses as the German traveller, Niclas Nicolai, and the Venetian Prince Soranzo,¹ concur that the Hebrew exiles from Spain were most skilful armourers and makers of military accoutrements. The representations of the Jews proved, however, futile. It was the fate of the unhappy descendants of the Spanish exiles once again to become wanderers. The storm gathered around them throughout Italy. The sulphur in the air and the rumbling underground were sufficient indications of the torrents of lava afterwards poured forth by the volcanic hatred of Paul IV. The Republic had long resisted the dark insinuations and suggestions of the spiritual authorities. Its commercial prosperity it placed above the fancied interests of the Catholic Church. But at last it, too, was forced to yield; a whole concourse of circumstances co-operated to seal the fate of the Marranos. The Jewish community itself seems to have regarded them with hostility, and thrown the weight of its influence in the scale against their stay in the city. They must have been most formidable competitors when trade jealousy caused Christians to look upon them as Jews, and Jews to see in them Christians. Just as the Roman Jewish community, according to Ibn Verga,² petitioned the Pope to refuse the Marranos admission into his city, by which they attained just the contrary, so the native Jewish families of Venice marshalled themselves on the side of the enemies of these unhappy exiles. No harm was apprehended from the Jews in the Ghetto. But these Judaizing Spaniards, baptised and yet so stiff-necked, were distributed among the Christians in all quarters of the city; and, from the Christian point of view, were a source of moral contagion to the souls of the Christian inhabitants of Venice. A similar physical danger was apprehended. The charge was brought against them of propagating contagious diseases. Their supposed filthy mode of life, aggravated the danger in the popular imagination. Whoever reads these aspersions will scarcely understand how the same people, whom inde-

¹ See M. A. Levy, *Don Joseph Nasi*, pp. 4, 5.

² *Schevet Jehuda*, § 57, ed. Wiener, p. 92, in his German translations, p. 188.

pendent and impartial Christian critics describe as model citizens in Turkey, should in Venice have been transformed into the incarnation of trickery and knavery. The worst of it, however, was that the Emperor Charles V. joined the ranks of their persecutors. We have it on the testimony of Messer Giovanni Francesco, Secretary to the Duke of Urbino's Ambassador, that the final resolve to expel the Marranos from Venice was due to the Emperor's influence. He thought it intolerable that this devil's brood, as he termed them, should be suffered to exist in Catholic lands. M. de Morvilliers, who, up to September, 1550, acted as the representative of France at Venice, and to whom we are indebted for so much information about Don Joseph, Duke of Naxos,¹ was too optimistic when he thought it probable that the harsh decree would be withdrawn, or, at least, mitigated. In November, 1549, this law, to which Don Joseph fell a victim, was put into execution. I believe I am not wrong in assuming the identity of the decree of expulsion which he recalled to the Venetian Ambassador, Bonrizzo,² at Constantinople, in 1565, and this edict for the banishment of the Marranos.

That the Ghetto could not destroy the intercourse between Christians and Jews, which attained so extensive a development at Venice, is proved by a law passed in 1671, forbidding Jews to wear arms and pointed knives.³ So prevalent had the custom become among the Jews of going about armed with a poignard at least—a clear proof of their complete assimilation with their neighbours in undesirable as well as desirable qualities. Recourse was had to special legislation against this tendency. But in this as in other cases, it proved quite unavailing.

DAVID KAUFMANN.

I.

La nazione hebrea è antichissima in Venetia. Era sparsa in quà in là per la Città habitando ciascuno d'essi dove più gli piaceva, e prestando danari con la sollicita usura del vinti per cento.

Fu per certo accidente occorso pigliata parte di ristringerli tutti in un luogo e del 1516 furono ridutti in certa parte della Città dove si

¹ M. A. Levy, *loco cit.* p. 41.

² *L.c.*, p. 45.

³ On March 24th, 1668, the Senate excluded the Jews from access to the Fondaco of the German merchants in Venice. See Dr. Henry Simonsfeld, *Der Fondaco dei Tedeschi in Venedig* (Stuttgart, 1887), II., 286.

fondeva l'artiglieria chiamata gietto, che poi alterandosi il vocabolo s'è detta Ghetto.

E per cavar da essi pubblicamente più utile che si potesse e preservarse da ogni danno che potessero portare alla povertà degli artefici moltiplicando, e crescendo in numero fù loro prohibito il poter prestare con la solita usura del 20 per cento et furono obbligati ad haver sempre tre banchi aperti i quali con la sola risposta di cinque per cento prestassero danari col pegno fin a certa soma come si usa per comodità de poveri ne monti eretti e chiamati di pietà da Christiani.

Aggiunsero che non potessero esercitare arte di sorte alcuna, ne comperar merci per rivenderle o farne botteghe per la Città lasciando semplicemente loro libero il trafficare per via di merci e rispondenti forestieri il loro danaro.

Le case del Ghetto furono a beneficio de Padroni Christiani cresciuto un terzo di più di quello, che prima pagavano d'affitto ma con conditione che non potessero ne tempi avvenire ricevere alcuna alteratione di prezzo.

Sono anche poi doppio qualche tempo stati obbligati ad apparare e fornire a proprie spese tutti que palazzi che secondo l'occorenze si pigliano dal Principe per alloggiare a spese pubbliche Principi, Ambasciatori e personaggi forestieri e questo per tutto il tempo solamente che detti forestieri si trattengono e sono alloggiati.

Nelle necessità della Republica contribuiscono ma in questo più come mercanti con la proportione degli altri mercanti che vengono tassati secondo le loro facultà che come hebrei.

Il Ghetto è stato ampliato due volte del. . . . fu accresciuto di case et ultimamente l'anno passato vi si è pur fatta una nuova giunta di 20 case obbligandosi all'incontro gli hebrei sotto pena di 2,000 ducati che per tutto un anno debbono esser venuti ad habitare in Venetia 20 famiglie forestiere.

Gli hebrei levantini e Ponentini hanno un privileggio particolare che essendo vietato dagli ordini della Republica il negotio di Levante e di Ponente a tutti i Mercanti Christiani che non sono Venetiani essi solamente trafficano liberamente nell'uno e nell'altro luogo et hanno un Magistrato di Nobili Venetiani detto de Cinque savi che solo e sommariamente giudica ne loro interessi, cose tutte che hanno servito e servono d'invito agli hebrei di quel paese di trasferirsi a Venetia.

Un'altra cosa ancora ha servito a moltiplicare la natione, e questa è la sicurezza che trova qui tutta quella razza di spagnoli che battezzati tornano all'hebreismo perchè s'usa in questa parte una total conivenza ne si fa inquisitione come altrove per cercar se questa sorte di gente sia battezzata.

L'uffitio de Catauere che è un magistrato che consiste d'alcuni Nobili è giudice nel rimanente di tutta la natione et in tutte le Cause. E questo e quel più s'è creduto d'haver à comprendere in questa informazione non sapendosi particolarmente a che fine sia cercata da S. A^{za} Serenissima.

—*R. Archivio di Stato in Modena—Ebrei—Documenti.* (circa 1635).

II.

Di Venetia a XX. di Luglio L^{ta}

Illustrissimo et Excell^{mo} Sig. Col^{mo}

La causa del bando contra li marani intendo principalmente procedere dal dubbio che questi signori havessino di malatia et qualche peste per

luoro et che li hebrei di questa città hanno fatto grandissima fortuna cum dire che detti marani sono homini maligni di pratiche et di mala conditione. Tuttavia intendo che da essi Marani et massime da huomini che sono ricchi et che ben vivono, è stato dimostrato a questi signori che per luoro vien dato grande utile alla Città in più modi et che si presume che in fine la cosa serà moderata et che sarà permesso ad alcuni principali d'essi che vi possano stare.

De Vostra Ex^{ta},

Fidelis^{mo} et ben humil Servitore,

HIERONYMO FERUFFINO.

R. Archivio di Stato in Modena—Cancelleria Ducale—Dispacci degli Oratori Estensi a Venezia.

III.

Di Venetia 23 de Luglio del 50.

Illus^{mo} et Excel^{mo} Sig. Sig. mio Col^{mo}

Da Messer Giovan Francesco Secretario del predicto Sig. oratore di Urbino pagato da sva eccellentia ho inteso oltra il scritto per le precedenti circa le cause del bando mancato contra li Marani il che intesi da Monsignor de moruillier che dette cause sono diverse, et prima che a questi signori è stato raccordato che essi Marani sono peggio che li hebrei perchè non sono ne Christiani ne giudei li quali giudei tutti insieme in Ghetto separati da Christiani se ne stanno et per conversare detti Marani cum Christiani et habitare in diverse parti, essere stata fatta coscienza alli predetti Signori dimostrandosseli che detta conversatione è causa di molti errori et massime di far prevaricare molte persone Christiane, et che danno in oltra denari a usura, et che vi posson per la detta conversatione indurre de li nostri a fare il medesimo. Appresso che è gente maligna infida et di mala pratica et che non solamente basteria ad infettare le anime de Christiani ma anche li corpi di qualche pestilentia soggiungendo il predetto Secretario havere di buon luoco che questi Signori habbian etiandio fatto esso bando ad eshortatione del Imperatore dal quale sia stato detto che questo Dominio Christiano et qual fa professione di Catholico come può tollerare che tal gente perversa et diabolica et piena di fezze habiti in Venetia et nelle terre Soe, et si li cose sono del modo inteso tenere por oppenione che la parte di detto bando sarà interamente osservata et non forse moderata come il predetto Signor Ambasciator de franza mi disse volere credere.

De V^{tra} Ecc^{tia},

Fidelissimo et ben humil Servitore,

HIERONYMO FERUFFINO.

R. Archivio di Stato in Modena—Cancelleria Ducale—Dispacci degli Oratori Estensi a Venezia.

IV.

Di Venetia a 24 di Luglio del 50.

Ill^{mo} et Ecc^{mo} Sr Sr mio Col^{mo}

Circa la parte renovata contro li Marani la qual fù fatta nel 9^o havendone parlato al predicto Sig^{re} Ambasciatore ho inteso che veramente le principali cause d'essa parte e del bando sian l'essere stato mostrato a questi signori che conversando essi come conversavano cum Christiani corrompessino molti et che seminasseno una mala et pessima dottrina. E che per alloggiare in una casa in tre et quatro famiglie et stando sborcamente (*sic*) tenendo malissimo li luoro alloggiamente era dubitato et temuto di malatia et de qualche pestilentia per causa di luoro procedere et vivere et che si ben li detti Marani hanno procurato che almeno puossin star fino a 300 d'essi cum mostrare che dano et darano utile alla città che nondimeno Egli crede per essere abboriti et in mal predicamento come sono non farano alcuno effetto anzi che questi Signori vorranno che la detta parte renovata sia interamente osservata.

De V^{ra} Ecc^{sa},

Fideliss^{mo} et ben humil Servitore,

HIERONYMO FERUFFINO.

R. Archivio di Stato in Modena—Cancelleria Ducale—Dispacci degli Oratori Estensi a Venezia.

V.

Venetia, 17 Luglio, 1671.

Rigorouso proclama è stato pubblicato nel Ghetto col quale vien proibito agli Hebrei il portar qualsisia sorte d'armi, come anco cortelli quando non siano senza punta.

R. Archivio di Stato in Modena—Cancelleria Ducale—Avvisi e Notizie dall'Estero.

קס"ז

אם התחלת מציאות האדם וסוף שלימותו מיד ה" יתברך המה ואי אפשר להגיע זולתו מה יעשה אדם לו לטובתו אולם היות התחלתו מאתו הנה הוא מבואר מעצמו מהתחלת הויתו אם בפרטו ואם בכללו והדבר אלקי בלתי אפשרי להגיע בהשתדלות אם מצד מהותו ואם מצד רוחב גבולו וזה כי מלבד מה ששיגוהו בדרכו פגעים רעים מבקשת הצרכים ההכרחיים ורוע הבחירה הנה ידביקוהו בעתו המון המונעים והמעניקים מקוצר המשיג ולאות כו(מ)[ח]ותיו ככל מופתיו תולדותיו לבית אבותיו אמנם לשבר כל אלה המונעים הרעים רבים קמים עליו הוכרח לשום עליו

מלך להנהיג כלי כחותיו הוא שבחר בו ה' למלוך על האדם כמו שאמר החכם¹ שכל איש יכלכל מחלתו כמו שנתבאר הדעות האלה בפרש(ו)² אשת חיל בשער שנים ועשרים ששם נתאמן אמון ההנהגה בדברים נסתרים הן מצד רוב פעלים הכוללים והחלקיים בהתחלת חסר³ ההכרחיים בקראתה אשת חיל כוללה בכל חמעות קרוב מאוד למה שיאות למלאה השכל בעיוניו ולמודיו שבהם יפול עקר שבחו לעשות מהעיקר עיקר ולחגור בעזו מתניו לאמץ זרועות האיש להחנהג בהתנהג השכל היא תושיה והתורה⁴ ולזה נתעוררה נשמתו ושכלו אנחנו צעירי הגולה ק"ק קו"רי אשר במדינת קאמפנ"ייה רחוקה מרוס"א מהלך יום עינינו תמיד אל ה' אלהינו עד שיחננו⁵ ומיום היותנו פה לא חסר מקהלינו פ"ת ב"ג המלך⁶ מלכי (המלך) המלכים הקביה ויין משתיו לסעוד לבנו ולהשען תחת עץ החיים בתורה תמימה משיבת נפש ובבית הכנסת להתפלל בו תפילת צבור הנשמעת תמיד וכמו שגלוי לכל העמים הגם כי כלנו דלים ורשים ויגיע כפינו כי (נו)⁷ [א] כל בזעת אפנו נביא לחמינו לא מנענו הטוב להעמיד תמיד בינינו חכם ורופא מבני עמינו ללמוד את בנינו ולדרוש לנו בכל שבת שבת דברי תלמוד ואגדא כפי מה שיאות⁸ ויהי כי הקיפו ימי הצער והטירודים והמסיות והצרות והעולות עוד זה מדבר בזמן הפיפ"ור פאו"ל רביעי שאז מה מאד הקיפה הצעקה אל גבול⁹ ישראל נאקה ומועקה שם במתנינו מן העבודה הקשה אשר עובד בינינו מהבו"לא שהוציא כנגדינו עד שלא השאיר לנו מחייה¹⁰ והדוחקים עלו השתרגו על צוארינו ביציאת הקומיס"ארי שהיו נוטלים את ממונינו ועונשים אותנו או לגלי"אה או למיתה באופן שמי לא היה בידו כח לסבול ולקדש את השם היו ממירים דתנו הקדושה עד שארכו כמו רבו הממירים בזמן ההוא והנשארי¹¹ לא נשאר להם בלתי אם גוייתם וצורתם¹² והדוחק¹³ ההם סבנו גם סבבנו כי כסלא לאוניא¹⁴ כאלו חיו נבלע ישראל וכאלו יושב בין תנור לכירים כמי שיכפאו שד ורוח כביר ובפרט מלכות קמפנ"יאה אשר עירנו בתוכו שכולו אם בוצרים באו לו אם שורדי לילה הלא יגנבו דיים במלחמת הפיפ"ור פאו"ל רביעי הנ"ל הלא ישאירו עוללות וכל שכן עניי עמינו הדרר¹⁵ במדינה הזאת עד שנתנו עיניהם בנו ונעשנו גל של עצמות ואין לאל ידינו לחיות כי דלונו מאד ואפי' דינו אין נדן בעסקנו וזה בא¹⁶ הזמן המר והנמהר הזה כמו שגלוי ומפורסם לכל העמים גדול האנקה והצעקה בוקה ומבוקה ומבולקה ופיק ברכים וחלחלה בכל מתנים פני כלנו קבצו פרור מגודל סדרי הבו"לא קשה ועצומה שיצ(י)את עם כל דתי הנימוסים שיסדר עלינו הפיפ"ור פ"א חמישי יר"ה שלא די עצירתנו בכל מקום שאנחנו דרים בנו עלינו ויקיפו חומות סוגרים ומסוגרי¹⁷ אין יוצא ואין בא לשאת ולתת עמם עד כי תפליא עצת הסדר ותגדיל תושיה הנימוס שאין אנו יכולים לעשות שום סחורה שבעולם לא מדבר הנזון ולא מבגדים חדשים ואפי' מלאכתנו אין אנו יוכלין לעשות¹⁸ הגם שהעמים נהפכו כלם ממחוק למר באמרם שאסור להם לתת לנו שום סיוע והנאה ולהשתדל עמנו בשום

¹ Prov. xviii. 14.² Dan. i. 13.³ Isaiah xv. 8.⁴ Berach. 6a.⁵ Job i. 16.

צד ומה מאד תמיד מיום אל יום מעת אל עת באו עלינו הצרות הנ"ל דמעות נזלו עינינו ודמעתנו על לחיינו לא נחננו פונת לנו עינינו אל ה' אלקינו לבכות במר נפשנו באופן שקהלינו זה כלו ייליל יוריד מוריד כנחל דמעה יום ולילה. ויהי כי הקיפה הצעקה בראותינו הצרה הנ"ל אשר על זה דוה לבנו ועל אלה חשכו עינינו אמנם על זאת נספרה ונייליל נעשה מספר כתני' ואבל כבנות יענה כי כלנו כצאן תעינו איש לדרכו פנינו להמיר דת האל הקדושה שבכל יום ויום באים משפחות גדולים וקטנים חכמים ונבונים דלים ועשירים וממירים דתם והם היו בעברינו מסיתים ומדיחים ופנים אנשי ישראל אל אמונתם מלבד שרודפין אותנו ועליהם ועל הסדרים הנזכרים הרגנו כל היום כל בתינו מעיר אל עיר הושמנו כצאן טבחה הורדפנו ולא הונח לנו ואין מידם מציל וחי נפשנו לאל חי שלימים מועטים חלפו למו זה כמו שני חדשים נסע מפה קור' תוך קהלינו איש תם וישר וירא אלקים ללכת בארץ רומ' אל עסקיו ושמו אברהם בכ"מ בצלאל ז"ל ויהי בדרך במלון ארבו לדמו והרגוהו עד שכאשר נודע הדבר נסעה החבורה מק"ק קור' וקרוביו לבקשו. ומרוב ההוצאות שנעשו מצאו עצמותיו לבד ובעל מחנה שהרגו נתן ביד החצר והוציאו חפשי. ועל כן הלילו יושבי ישראל הרימי בכח קולך¹ בכל מקום שהם כשופר הרם קולך והגד לעמי צרותינו ולבית יעקב דחקינו ואנחנו לא ידענו מה נעשה רק על היותינו תו"לע"ת יעקב מתי ישראל בעל פפיות סדרנו תמיד בינינו תעניות צבור ותפלות על כל צרה עם תקיעות שופר לבשר(נו) שקים ונשב על אפר ונזעק אל ה' אלקינו בחזקה מקטנינו עד גדולינו. דבק לשון יונק אל חכו בצמא עוללים שואלים לחם פורס אין להם אולי יתעשת ה' לנו ויצמיח לנו הכנת הצלה. וכה היתה תפילתנו מעינו מעינו נוחילה קרות לבנו הומה² ה' שמעה ה' סלחה ה' הקשיבה ועשה ל[ה]תעורר לכונו וכהאיר שכלינו לאחוז בכנפות בחירת הטוב לנו ולנפשותינו להנצל עצמינו ונפשנו מפח יוקשי השמדות ושלא יהיה מקומינו קברינו ובצפייתנו צפינו עד ה' למען רחמיו יערה עלינו רוח ממרום נצא השדה גלינה בכפרים³ של ארצינו הקדושה ולא ככופרים הממירים הנ"ל וממרום ישלח לנו איזה סיוע וגואל יגל יעקב ישמח ישראל :

והנה צעקת ותפילת ק"ק קור' וענויים כי רבה ובכיתם כי כבדה מאד והנה אלינו קול רגלי מבשר משמיע שלי' הבנות העניים והאביונים השואפים ומתאווים לצאת מן הגולה הזאת מבשר טוב חן וחסד הקהלות הקדושות. ועטרת תפארת חן וכבוד הנשיא הישר והמפסר ראש הראשונים ומעוז האישים עמוד הגולה וגולה⁴ ורוממות המלך ביפיו ובהלולו הוא הגבר הוקם ע"ל מן שמיא הדרבן המהימן צנצנת המן אסתרא די דהבא המרום והמעולה חשבון ואלעלא אדונינו דון יוסף שמאת ה' היתה לו היות נתונה בידו ארץ טבריא אשר בו בחר האל יתברך לעשות אות ומופת על גאולתנו ועל פדות נפשנו כמו שפסק הרמ"בם כספר סנהדרין סוף פרק ארבעה עשר⁵ ול' (ב)[כ]שנת-

¹ Isaiah xl. 9.² Jer. iv. 19.³ Cant. vii. 12.⁴ Zach. iv. 2.⁵ H. Synhedrin xiv. 12.

קלקלה השו(מ)[ר]ה גלו ממקום למקום וכו' וסופן לטבריא וכו'. וקבלה היא שבטבריא עתידים לחזור תחלה ומשם נעתקים למקדש וכו'. שמענו מכנף הארץ וזמירות צבי לצדיק הנשיא האדון הנ"ל הו"ל, והב מכיס: וסדר בכמה מקומות כגון בויניציאה ובאנקוניה ואנייות וסיועים לפתח אנקת אסיר ובני תמותה להוציא ממסגר ומבית כלא יושבי חשך הגולה הזאת וכ"ש ליהודים אשר מטה ידם ואין לאל יכולתם ללכת ולהוליך בתייהם שם ונטבעו בטיט היון עד שבאו מים עד נפש. וגם שמענו כי רבים נסעו ועברו על סיוע הקהלות והנשיא הנ"ל. ובפרט כי הוא מבקש אנשים יהודים בעלי מלאכות כדי לישב ולתקן את הארץ ביישובה כי מה רב טובו אשר צפן הנה שכרו אתו ופועלתו לפניו ה" ישרים פעולו וירוממהו ויגדלהו כרצונו וכרצון בני ביתו ואהביו לפני שמש ינון שמו אשר בשמענו שמח לבנו ויגל כבודינו אף בשרינו. ולשמועתו שמחה אחזנתו ואז לב טהור ברא לנו אלקים ורוח נכון חדש בקרבינו ונתעוררנו כלנו בלב אחד כאיש אחד והסכמנו ונסד[ר] בינינו וקראנו איש לכל בית והלכנו לבית הכנסת ושם אתנו כמהר"ר מלאכי ג'ליקו איש ניפי הוא שכור מקהלינו ללמוד את בנינו ולדרוש לנו בכל שבת ושבת ולר[אפ]א[פ]ות חולי קהלינו ובחכמ[ה]ת[ת] הרפואה אשר עמו וסדרנו דברים בינינו לדבר כל אחד ואחד ממנו את כונתו על ענין נסיעתו מפה לבא לדרור תחת צל כנפי השם לצווי האדון והנשיא הנ"ל בטבריא. וכלנו בלב שלם ובנפש חפצה פצינו את פינו במאמר אחד לתת סדר למסעה הזאת. אם מה' היתה זאת שיזמין לנו עזר ו(י)סיוע כפי צורך עניו ק"ק קו"רי הנ"ל ובראשונה בחרנו לנו ארבעה אנשים מארבעה משפחות שיהיו לנו מנהיגי' ממסע למסע הם ילכו לפנינו לתת סדר והכנה למקום המלון לחם ומוזון לפי הטף והאנשים והנשים לפי הצורך שיצטרך לקנות ולחלק לנו המזונות: ומהארבעה האנשים הברורים בחרנו לנו שניהם שיהיו שלוחים מאתנו עד ויניציאה העירה קודם נסיעתנו לתור לנו את הסיוע מה הוא וללכת בכל פתחי הנדיבים עם אלקי אברהם אשר בכל (מ)[ת](ד)ינות הגולה ירחמו על קהלינו זה. ושם השנים השלוחים הם כמ"ר מיכאל בכמ"ר אהרן נ"ע וכ"מ יוסף בכ"מ מנחם תושבי קהלינו אשר הם בחרנו לנו יען היותם משפחות הגונות מיוחסי ישראל אנשים אשר צדק אזור מתנם והאמונה אזור חלצם תמיד רע"י עמם² פנות יקרות³ אצלינו ועולה לא נמצא בשפט[ת]ם ואשר כח בהם לעמוד על העניין הזה. ואליהם כל קהלינו כקטון כגדול ישמעון וישליכו ייהם וביוצא מפייהם אנו מקיימין פיהם כפינו וידם כידינו ולסור לגדור ולגזור עלינו כרצונם וכחפצם לא נסור ימין ושמאל מן הדבר אשר יסכימו ויסדרו כי בן נדרנו כלנו בדעות נפשינו בדלא אתיניסנא. ולראיית אמת מסרנו בידם פנקס חתום בחותם קהלינו וארצינו עיר קו"רי כי לב העם נתאחד ונתאפק לעשות ככל התורה וההנהגה והסדר אשר יסדרו השנים השלוחים. אשר שם בפנקס הנ"ל יוכלו לכתוב כל הנדבות אשר ימין ה" לנו מכל נדיב לב אשר ידבנו לבו מכתובת ידם אחד לאחד למצוא חשבון. וגם בן כדי להתעורר וללכד רצון לבנו וכדי להודיע לכבודכם כל מנין קהלינו

¹ Isaiah xli. 6.² Jer. xxiii. 2.³ Isaiah xxviii. 16.

האנשים וביתם הי' מטפס ונשיהם כדי להודיע די ספוק סיותינו ולהודיע עלוי ארץ טבר'י'א בביאתינו נספר ונכתוב כלם בפנקס הנ'ל כאשר כתבנו למעלה למען ירוץ קורא בו ובהיות כי התעוררות כזה לעת כזאת מה מאד דבר גדול לחשוב מחשבת ימי קץ הימין על רוב הסימנים הקהילה הקדושה הזאת כדי לחזק ידיים רפות וברכים כושלות ולאמץ לב השלוחים הנ'ל נתנו מאמת פניהם כל אנשי הקהל הנז' לחלות פני דרבנא דעמנא נר המערבי גלוסקא יפפיה נ(רכ) [בר] שתא דרהבא מוסמך בר מוסמך יין בר יין החכם השלם כמהר"ר מלאכי גליקו בכמהר"ר יעקב בכמהר"ר שלמה זצ"ל אשלי רברבי טובי ילך עמם לשלחם להאיר לפני השלוחים אויר לשבת נגדם ללכת יומם ולילה בכל מקום אשר ידרוך כף רגליהם ואחר דבורם אם יצטרך הנה מעלתו יוצא לקראת כבודכם כי דבר ידבר הוא מלאכי הנ'ל לפני בא יום ה' הגדול והנורא להשיב לב אבות ובנים על עניין הנדבה והסיוע להתעוררות קבוץ הגליות * ויקרא לקהלינו ה' יראה אשר יאמר היום בהר ה' יראה נסיעה גדולה כזאת * אשר לא היתה כמותו בזמן הזה מאז היו הצרות :

ולכן נדיבי עמים תולעת יעקב בעל פפיות רחמנים בני רחמנים (ע) [ט]לי אורות גורי אריות הכינו לכם צדה העניק תעניקו קהל קדושה וגדולה מגורנכם ומיקבכם ודעו וראו וזכרו ההוא גברא דיהבא שרי לההוא ענייא מאה זווי כל מעלי יומא דכפורי * בצנורא דרשא כי היכי דלא להתבייש כדאיתא התם * הגם מצינו שקודם שישראל יכנסו לארץ אמר דוד לפני הקב"ה עמך ישראל צריכים פרנסה אמר לו התפרנסו זה מזה מיד יועצים באחיתופל ושואלים באורים ותומים וכו' וכ"ש ובנו של קל וחומר סיוע להדריך עניים במשפט מגולה אל ארצינו ולאמת ישרים דרכם דרך הקבוץ הגם להרים מכשול השמדות והמיתות משונות מדרך עמינו ואין און יכולה לשמוע ולא פה לדבר גודל מעלת מצות המתנדרים שעולה עד כסא הכבוד ומתקן הצנורות מדין לרחמים כדאיתא במדרש נעלם האי צדיקא דעלמא אקרי בהאי צדק דהיא אומנותיה ואיהו קיומא דעלמא ותיקון כורסיה דקודשא בריך הוא בגין כך כתיב וצדיק יסוד עולם וכתוב צדק ומשפט מכון כסאך ועו' כדאמר * כההוא גברא לאתתיה בראותו עניי לפתחא קדים להו רפתא וכו' עד כי בגלל הדבר הזה בגלל הוא שחזור וכו' והתורה אמרה כי בגלל הדבר הזה יברכך ה' אלקיך בכל מעשה ידיך אמר :

קס"ח

אנשי חסד יראה אלקים אדירי עולם * מוספים כח בגבורה * מחזיקי בדק בית ה' * לשמוע אל הנהגה ואל תחנת אחיכם העניים והאביונים * הנה לשמוע און שמענו * וגם עדות ברורה ראתה עינינו * מאנשי ק"ק קורי' ישר' * מכל התלאות אשר מצאתם * והנזרות אשר נגזרו עליהם כמשפטי כל יחדיו בהם * ועו' הנה אחרי רחמי ה' לא תמנו * כספם וזהבם היה להם למגן ועתה עלי שפיים נשמע בכי תמרורים * כי הראשונות הנה באו והחדשות רבו כמו רבו

¹ Kethub. 67b.

² Berachoth, 3b.

³ Sabbath 151b.

ואין לאל ידם כי תם הכסף ולא נשאר להם בלתי מחנה רחמים. ויתנו אל לבם לשוב מאחרי התוהו כי לא יועילו שאם יחיו ימותו. וללכת אל מקום ה' צבאות ושאם ימותו יחיו. הם ונשיהם וטפם סך מאתים נפשות. ודעו אחינו כי טובתם רבה להציל את נפש אחיכם מן הדלקה. מזולת כי מהנסיעה הזאת תעוררנה לבות אחיכם כל בית ישראל וישימו ליה כבוד. וגם הוא ב'ה יוסיף שנית ידו לקנות שאר עמו אשר ישאר. ולא יוסיפו בני עולה לענותו. כי מי פעל ועשה הלא ה' זו קוינו לו. והוא נותן נשמה לעם עליה ורוח להולכים בה. קומו משכו מגן. חזקו ואמצו אותם מאשר חנן ה' לכם. ואל תרפו את ידיכם כי יש שכר לפעולתכם. וגם אנחנו צעירי הגולה קק אנקו'נה ישר' הגם כי רבו עלינו מבוכות וצרות כסידרן ושלא כסידרן וכבד עלינו המשא לפרנס את עניי ערינו מלבד שאר האביונים והדלים הבאים מסביבותינו. מ'מ לא העלמנו עינינו מהם רק עלה עלינו אל ה' בכל מאמצי כחנו. והאל הוא יודע. והנה השלשה אנשים האלה הבאים לק[ר] את מעלתכם הם אנשים צדיקים יראי אלקים. לבושי מעיל צדק ואבנט החסדים. ובאנ[ו]מונה לצורך הם הולכים ולא לצורכם. כאשר תוכל דמות תפארתם מהכתבים אשר בידם מהקהילות איטל'יאה ורומ'א ועדותם אשר נושאי' אתם. שם האחד מהם נחל נובע מקור חכמה. ונתעשר בשמא דרבנותא. ויהב ליה גולתא דרבנן הנשגב כמהר'ר מלאכי יצ'ו. והשני האנשים אחרים כתר שם טוב עולה על גביהם. ופה בקהלתינו יש אנשים מכירים היותם גזע נכבדים ותמימים. ופליגו זכים ומזוקקים לכן אחינו שארית פלטת ישראל הענק תעניקו להם איש כמתנת ידו כברכת ה' אלקיכם אשר נותן לכם. לבשו צדקה וחסד. ולאנקת האביונים האלה עתה תקומו והיתה זאת לכם לעזרה וה' ישיב גמולכם הטוב להריק לכם ברכה עד בלי די ותזכו לראות כבוא לציון גואל ובנין בית אריאל ועל דרכם יגיה אור ושל' אמ'.